

Onlooker's Diary

Wycombe puzzle



PAUL BATES . . .
rejoins Barry Darvill

FOLLOWING John Pratt's move to sign professional forms for Reading F.C., another piece of the Wycombe Wanderers puzzle for 1969-70 fell into place this week, with the news that Paul Bates is off to re-join his old friend, Barry Darvill, by switching to Chesham United.

Darvill, who resigned as Wanderers' team coach in December last, and was appointed as manager of Chesham during March, confirmed that Bates is on the move to the Meadow, but at the moment at least, only as a player.

Suggestions that Bates might be taking over as Reserve team manager are, once again for the moment, discounted. Darvill tells me that he will have charge of both teams at first, although no doubt he will be making use of both Bates, and Johnny Gilmour, who was last year's reserve team boss but only continues in a playing capacity next season.

Bates can claim three years experience as Reserve team manager of Wycombe, when under Darvill. His playing career includes spells with Hendon, Sutton, with whom he reached Wembley before losing the Amateur Cup final to Wimbledon, and of course Wanderers. Representative honours include F.A., Isthmian, Berks and Bucks, and eventually English International caps.

Now the question must inevitably be asked . . . who else, if any, of Darvill's friends at Wycombe, and a number of leading players can be put in this category, will follow Bates?

Names are being mentioned, and rumours are flying.

From Darvill however there is a cautious "no comment". But if any surprises do lay in store, then they can be expected within the next few weeks.

Darvill has arranged four pre-season matches, all tough, to prepare his side for the new season before August 9. Training starts on Tuesday night, and then, with signing on papers being brought into the reckoning, any guessing games between the Meadow and Loakes Park can be either proved or disproved shortly.

One thing is certain. Chesham's Amateur Cup run of two years ago does not impress the United's present team boss one bit. And it is the kind of consistency that will win promotion to the Premier Division that Darvill wants.

Last year he raised Chesham from the relegation zone to leave five other clubs below them in the final table, while still ensuring that the Athenian League Division One Memorial Shield should find its way to the club.